

WOODBIDGE SCHOOL

EXTENDED SERVICES DEBT POLICY

VERSION	DATE	DETAIL
1.0	Oct 19 Reviewed 2022	Approved by Governors

Background

The Woodbridge School Extended Services Debt Policy has been adopted to ensure that a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents whose children attend extended services provision. The Local Education Authority is not accountable for the administration of extended services therefore the responsibility now falls on the school to pursue instances of non-payment. As a result, the school budget will have to directly fund any outstanding debts that cannot be recovered thereby directly affecting the amount of money that is available to provide education to all pupils.

Provision of Extended Services

The extended services provision is no different to any other business in that it has to be paid for by someone. This provision is available to children, but at a cost to the parent/carer.

Cost of Extended Services

This provision is available to children at a cost of £3 per hour. These costs **must** be paid for monthly. Any revision to the extended services prices will be notified to parents/carers the term prior to the new charge taking effect.

Payment for extended services

Payment should be provided (preferably in cheque format/parent pay, made payable to Derbyshire County Council) on a monthly basis after an invoice has been received, or an agreed day in a sealed envelope clearly marked with your child's name and class number, and amount enclosed to the office. The school must ensure that all extended services money collected is banked in a timely manner in accordance with the school's financial regulations which are periodically inspected by audit.

Management of extended services

To ensure that the school's budget is not adversely affected by the cost of providing extended services, the Governors consider that fairest system to all families is to pursue a 'zero tolerance' approach. Although this may seem harsh to some parents it is important that the extended services provision does not run at a loss, otherwise the school budget will be affected, and to the detriment of all our pupils.

When payment has not been received for the previous month's provision, the school may provide the service where it is felt that this is a temporary situation e.g. lost or forgotten money, temporary hardship etc. however, details should be recorded in writing and a record maintained and monitored.

If a child has extended services provision which has not been paid for, a letter/text detailing how much is owed will be sent to the parent/carer requesting payment directly to the school within 7 days. The same process will be used if a cheque is not honoured by the bank. Prompt action will be taken to address any debt issue at an early stage in order to prevent arrears amassing.

Where a child continues to require this provision, the school must establish if the parent/carer is experiencing hardship which affects their ability to pay. Under these circumstances the parent/carer should be invited to speak confidentially to the Head Teacher.

When the debt exceeds £50 for a child or family a formal letter must be sent to the parent/carer informing them of their required actions.

If the debt exceeds £300 for a family and/or action proves unsuccessful in securing extended services money arrears, the school will write to the parent/carer, explaining that the school is not obliged to provide extended services provision where advance payment is not forthcoming.

Monitoring and recovery of extended services debts

At each meeting of the Governing body/finance committee, the head teacher will provide governors with details of any outstanding extended services debt and the current/profiled position with regard to the overall profit or loss of the provision. If the provision is running at a loss, the governors will then have to decide on the existence of the provision in school. The aim of this policy is to minimise the opportunity for debt balances to build up and incurring costly referral to the school's solicitors. The school does, however, reserve the right to begin legal proceedings to recover outstanding extended services debts and inform the local authority legal services.

Where full or part payment for extended services is to be made via voucher scheme, regular reconciliations should be performed to ensure all monies due is received from the voucher company to avoid the commencement of action with the parent should there be a delay in payment from the company.

All write-offs of outstanding debt must be approved by the governing body/finance committee following submission of details of the debt by the head teacher together with reasons for no further action being taken.

Example letter 1

Parent of carer of (Pupil name)

Address

Dear xxx

Extended services provided to (pupil name)

According to the school's financial records, you have not paid extended services for your child (pupil name) in Class xx. As at xx/xx/xx your account is showing a debt of £xx

In order that there is no detriment to the school's budget, please clear your child's debt by making arrangements for the outstanding extended services debt to be paid immediately. Once you have cleared the current debt I should be grateful if you could ensure that you keep your account in credit. The current cost of this provision is £x per hour.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears or wish to discuss the matter further, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Example – letter 2

Parents or carer of (pupil name)

Address

Dear xxx

Extended Services provided to (pupil name)

I am writing regarding the current level of outstanding extended services debt that is showing on your account. Despite previous correspondences and messages the debt for your child xx in class xx is still outstanding. The school's records show that as at xx/xx/xx your account is £x in debt. The current cost of extended services is £x per hour.

I would ask that you please make arrangements to clear this debt immediately and take steps to ensure your account is kept in credit in the future.

As the school's budget will have to fund any overall debt incurred through extended services provision, it is essential that all payments are up to date so that the quality of the service provided to all pupils is maintained. Unfortunately, if the debt is not cleared by xxx the extended services provision will no longer be provided to your child. The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the outstanding debt and to inform the local authority.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately so that this matter can be resolved.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher